



The Seventh African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Triennial Conference 2021

Promoting Intra-Africa Collaboration in the field of Higher Education in Africa:

Dates: 3rd, 4th and 5th December 2021

Time: 8:30-17:00 (GMT+1)

Venue: Azalai hotel

Video conference (link: <https://bit.ly/2Zerlkj>)

Concept note
for

Strengthening collaborative action for digital learning across RUFORUM member universities through development and delivery of selected online courses

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Background

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a Network of 129 African universities in 38 African Countries. RUFORUM's third and current Vision 2030: African Universities' Agenda for Agricultural Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (AHESTI) is seen as the voice for Higher Education in Agriculture, and indeed Science, Technology and Innovation. With this, RUFORUM is aspiring to emerge as a regional knowledge hub for Higher Education in Agriculture. AHESTI envisions *vibrant, transformative universities to catalyse sustainable, inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa*. Through one of its four pillars, Knowledge Hub (K-Hub), RUFORUM is working towards Facilitating Universities to innovatively use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to improve teaching and learning. We strongly believe that ICTs can help the RUFORUM network improve service provision and to whether disruptions due to global emergencies such as the Corona virus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and other natural environmental crises.

In light of this, RUFORUM received support from the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) to implement a project to establish Regional E-learning Platform (REP) to help facilitate its member universities to

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innovatively use ICT to improve teaching and learning. This is expected to support and facilitate universities in acquiring relevant and practical solutions for adoption of ICT in teaching and learning. By doing so, the network universities are able to train through innovative and creative ICT-enabled techniques that deliver and enhance the student learning experience.

With this support from BADEA, RUFORUM Secretariat is mobilising the member universities to participate in and benefit from the establishment of a customised user-friendly Regional E-learning Platform, built on open source technologies and a Moodle framework. This is expected to help contribute in terms of effective provision of learning materials and sharing of experience across its Network. The RUFORUM Regional E-learning Platform will provide free content resources developed at the secretariat to support network university staff capacity building and enhance teaching, learning and research. It is part of the campaign RUFORUM has been carrying out to facilitate its network.

At the beginning of 2020, RUFORUM intensified efforts to towards integration of ICT in teaching and learning within its Network. As part of the plan to promote e-learning in the Network, the RUFORUM Secretariat undertook a survey to identify Masters-level courses to be developed or redesigned for online delivery across the RUFORUM Network. As a result of this survey, initial set of courses were identified for delivery as e-learning course modules. Some of these courses need to be reviewed and others redeveloped as e-learning course contents. A number of experts who are currently teaching these courses or who are able to teach them online, have been identified to support the process. Accordingly a three-day slot has been secured as a side event during the RUFORUM Triennial Conference 2021 in Benin to provide a platform for validating and review of selected courses.

Objectives

1. Orient academic staff on curriculum review process and guidelines.
2. Review and develop content for selected courses for online delivery.
3. Provide training on content development for online delivery

Approach

This will be a blended three-day event which will bring together subject experts from the RUFORUM Network and other university professors and researchers who have been identified to support the process. It will be organised in sessions addressing specific issues towards curriculum review process, development of common courses across RUFORUM network and skills development for delivery of online courses. Lead experts will provide orientation and guidance towards the development of the online courses and will facilitate collaborative learning processes during the three days of event as outlined in the programme in the next page.

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Draft Programme:

Time	Agenda item	Responsible Party
Day 1:		
Chair: Prof. Ezin Eugene, Head of E-learning, University of Abomey Calavi, Benin		
Rapporteur: Mr. Moses Waswa, RUFORUM Secretariat & Dr Hellen Namawejje, Makerere University		
Session I: Setting the scene		
8:30 – 8:40	Welcome remarks	Prof. Maxime Da Cruz, Former Rector University d'Abomey Calavi
8:40 – 8:50	Remarks and Setting the Scene	Prof. John Akec Apuruot, Vice Chancellor, University of Juba, South Sudan
8:50 – 9:05	Key note Address: Reforming, Transforming and Adapting African Higher Education Curricular in a Competitive Age	Dr. Gillian Kasirye, Makerere University, Uganda
Session II: Collaborative Action		
9:05 – 9:15	Progress towards establishment of RUFORUM Regional E-learning Platform	Dr. Francis Otto, Manager, Knowledge Hub, RUFORUM Secretariat
9:15 – 9:30	Expectation Ideation	Prof Jude Lubega, Ag. Vice Chancellor, Nkumba University, Uganda Mr Ajer Basil, Commissioner for Science and Technology, Uganda
9:30 – 10:00	Thematic group formation	Mr. David Martin Amitu, RUFORUM Secretariat
10:00 – 10:30	Health Break	
Session III: Course Analysis		
10:30 – 13:00	SWOT Analysis of the target courses	All (in groups)
	Defining Mission, Aims and Objectives of Selected courses	All (in groups)
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break	
Session III: Development of course Knowledge and Skills		
14:00 – 16:00	Defining Skills and Knowledge set	All (in groups)
	Development of Skills and Knowledge Matrix	All (in groups)

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16:00 – 16:20	Health Break	
16:20 – 16:30	Summary presentations of the day	Group Leaders
Day 2:		
Chair: Prof Jude Lubega, Ag. Vice Chancellor, Nkumba University, Uganda		
Rapporteur: Prof Susan Balaba, Makerere University, Uganda & Dr Ratheil Houndji, Lecturer, University of Abomey Calavi		
Session I: Harnessing digital technologies for education in Africa		
8:30 – 8:45	Recap of Day 1	Dr. Hellen Namawejje, Makerere University, Uganda
8:45 – 9:00	Guest presentation: Developing successful e-learning courses for Higher Education Institutions in Africa: Key considerations	Dr. Precious Gawanani, Director of Open Distance and e-Learning (ODEL), LUANAR, Malawi
9:00 – 9:15	Respondent 1: Lessons from Uganda	Dr Drake Mirembe, Makerere University
9:15 – 9:30	Respondent 2: Lessons from Benin	Prof. Ezin Eugene, Head of E-learning, University of Abomey Calavi, Benin
9:30 – 10:00	Discussion	All
10:00 – 10:30	Health Break	
Session II: Review of existing contents of selected courses		
10:30 – 13:00	Review of course contents	All (in groups)
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break	
Session III: Development of contents of selected courses		
14:00 – 16:00	Course content development	All (in groups)
16:00 – 16:20	Health Break	
Session IV: Wrap up		
16:20 – 17:20	Summary presentations of the day	Group Leaders
17:20 – 17:30	Closing Remarks by Session Chair	Prof Jude Lubega, Ag. Vice Chancellor, Nkumba University, Uganda
Day 3:		
Chair: Prof Mick Mwala, University of Zambia		
Rapporteur: Dr Angele Ibanda, DR Congo & Dr Arfang Badji, Senegal		
Session I: Evaluating online courses		
8:30 – 8:45	Recap of Day 2	Prof Susan Balaba, Makerere University, Uganda





8:45 – 9:00	Guest presentation 1: Key considerations and approaches for developing online courses	Prof. Kathleen Ann Mur Leresche, Former Professor at the University of Zimbabwe and member of RUFORUM International Advisory Panel
9:00 – 9:15	Guest presentation 1: Effective Techniques for evaluating online courses	Prof Jude Lubega, Ag. Vice Chancellor, Nkumba University, Uganda
9:15 – 9:30	Guest presentation 2: Integration of artificial intelligence in research for development	Dr Ratheil Houndji, Lecturer, UAC
9:30 – 10:00	Discussion	All
10:00 – 10:30	Health Break	
Session II: Development of evaluation techniques for selected online courses		
10:30 – 13:00	Development of evaluation techniques for selected online courses	All (in groups)
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break	
Session III: Wrap up and next steps		
14:00 – 15:00	Reports from the groups	Group leaders
15:00 – 15:20	Open discussion	All
15:20 – 16:30	Panel discussion: Promoting Intra-Africa Collaboration in the field of Higher Education – Needed actions	Panelists: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prof Joy C Kwesiga, Vice Chancellor, Kabale University 2. Prof. Maud Kamatenesi-Mugisha, Vice Chancellor, Bishop Stuart University 3. Prof. Adil Deifalla, Gezira University, Sudan 4. Prof. Address Mauakowa Malata, Vice Chancellor, Malawi University of Science and Technology
16:30 – 16:50	Summary and Way Forward	Dr. Sylvannus Mensah, RUFORUM Secretariat
16:50 – 17:00	Remarks by BADEA Representative	Dr Osman Mahgoub Ahmed ElFiel, Senior Advisor, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA)
17:00 – 17:15	Closing Remarks	Prof. Prosper Gandaho, Former Rector, University of Parakou, Benin

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